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ABSTRACT

This booklet presents and discusses results of a national survey that queried secondary school administrators, activity sponsors, and students about a variety of issues related to extracurricular activities. The booklet opens with a brief discussion of the myths, realities, and current challenges surrounding extracurricular activities and then presents in turn the survey responses of students, administrators, and activity sponsors. The student survey investigated the extent and type of activity participation; attitudes about the importance, quality, and problems of activity programs; and the reasons students do or do not participate. The administrator survey investigated attitudes about the importance, quality, and problems of activity programs, as well as views of the organization, scheduling, policies, and sponsorship of activity programs. The sponsor survey investigated who sponsors are; how teachers become sponsors; the extent of sponsor participation; and attitudes toward the contemporary nature of activity programs. (Author/JG)

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Student Activities in the Seventies

A Survey Report

Ruth Long
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EA 009 769

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Foreword

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES, a significant part of every secondary school program, create serious discussion among educators today as they face, among other issues, budgetary cutbacks, negotiated teacher contracts, inflationary costs, alternative school options, and changing student interests. All have serious implications for the future of extracurricular activities in the nation's schools.

With the help of Ruth Long, Robert Buser, and Michael Jackson, we are able to present in *Student Activities in the Seventies* the results of an NASSP-sponsored survey that queried administrators, activity sponsors, and students about their views concerning extracurricular activities—ranging from the quality and effectiveness of such activities to selecting and compensating sponsors. The monograph opens with a brief discussion by the authors of the myths and realities surrounding the subject plus what they consider the current challenges. What follows this discussion is a detailed account of survey responses.

We appreciate the cooperation of the many middle, junior high, and senior high schools that participated in this study. As in other NASSP surveys, the percentage of members responding to their Association's needs was significantly above what national opinion takers consider as statistically necessary.

Owen B. Kiernan
Executive Director
NASSP

1. Problem Overview

STUDENT ACTIVITIES PROGRAMS are indispensable in the large majority of American secondary schools. However, their function, place, and future remain uncertain. While a third of today's students indicate that extracurricular activities are more important than their classes, administrators are finding it increasingly difficult to mount financial and faculty support for student activities. While significant numbers of the school community appraise the school's performance in terms of its successes and failures in extra-class activities, they continue to vote against school bond referenda that would strengthen such programs.

While teachers profess a willingness to sponsor activities at the time of initial employment, many seek to avoid sponsorships as they achieve tenure and seniority. This is particularly crucial in a context of declining enrollments, decreased teacher mobility, and more senior faculties. Certainly it portends problems for administrators seeking to recruit sponsors. While boards and administrators are finding it difficult to finance existing programs, they are confronted by mandates from governmental agencies and courts requiring equal offerings and comparable facilities for all sexes which, in turn, will be expensive.

The situation is further compounded by negotiated teacher contracts, increased demands from students, and inflated activity costs. Additionally, although the amount of time devoted to student activities by principals is substantial, there remains a paucity of research or writing to assist them in student activity-related decision making. In the interest of filling this information void, a series of NASSP-sponsored studies were initiated.

The student survey was designed to determine the extent and type of activity participation; to assess student attitudes about the importance, quality, and problems of student activity programs; and to identify the reasons students do or do not participate.

The administrator survey also was concerned with the importance, quality, and problems of student activity programs. In addition, administrators were asked about the organization, scheduling, policies, and sponsorship of their activity programs.

The sponsor survey was designed to determine who sponsors are, what the extent of their participation is, how they become activity advisers, and what their attitudes are toward the contemporary nature of activity programs.

2. Myths, Realities, and Challenges

Myths

Myth 1. Student activities are unimportant to today's secondary school students. One of three students in this nationwide study says that extracurricular activities are more important than their courses. In addition, student participation in activities is perceived by students as an important way to establish status and acceptance by fellow students. Students spend significant amounts of time and money on student activities. Almost 50 percent spend four or more hours of time each week and over $100 each year on activities. Activities are important to students!

Myth 2. Students are dissatisfied with the extracurricular activities in their schools. Six in 10 students are satisfied with the activities and only one in 10 is dissatisfied. Over half of the students feel there are enough activities to meet the needs of their student body. Students are satisfied with their school's program.

Myth 3. Students don't participate in extracurricular activities because of high costs, teacher domination, parental disapproval, or unavailability for their sex. Over half of the students report that they don't participate because they have a job outside of school, because activities are irrelevant, or because activities are scheduled after school. High costs, teacher domination, parental disapproval, and unavailability for their sex are given as reasons for nonparticipation by fewer than 40 percent of the students.

Myth 4. Students aren't participating for the right reasons. More than three of four students state they participate for fun and enjoyment, personal achievement, or needs and interests. Other reasons given are to explore experiences unavailable in the regular school program and to broaden personal and social contacts. Few students indicate that they participate in order to get pictures in the yearbook or because teachers expect it.

Myth 5. The needs of special student groups are not being effectively met. Students and administrators generally agree that the needs of the following groups are effectively fulfilled: males, academically average students, females, highly academic students, extremely creative students, and students of minority groups. The two types of students that more than half of the students and administrators agree are not being served effectively by activity programs are those who have low academic abilities and those who are nonconformists.

Realities

Reality 1. A significant number of students are not participating in the activities in which they would like to participate. Three of 10 students characterize themselves as inactive, three of 10 administrators describe the attitude of students as indifferent or unsatisfactory, and four of 10 sponsors report that their student body's attitude toward activities is apathetic. Three of four administrators say that under-participation is a greater problem than over-participation. A significant portion of students has never participated in school governance (66%), school service (80%), and community-oriented activities (80%). But of even more significance is the portion of students who would like to but have not participated: in school governance (20%), community-oriented activities (17%), or hobby-leisure related activities (21%).

Reality 2. Significant problems face student activity programs over the next 10 years. Administrators state that extracurricular activity programs are faced with a lack of funds, teacher apathy, and student apathy.

Reality 3. Administrators and sponsors are essentially in agreement as to the characteristics essential for a student activity to be recognized as a school offering. Nine of 10 administrators and sponsors feel that recognized activities should be school sanctioned, directed to student needs and interests, voluntarily engaged in by students, sponsored by a faculty member, and held in school facilities. They disagree somewhat in the areas of credit and scheduling. Administrators are likely to feel that activities should be scheduled during school time and they are more likely to believe that activities should carry no academic credit.

Reality 4. Student activity participation remains restrictive. A third of the administrators indicate that participation in student government and class office requires a grade point average above that required of their state activity association. The same percentage feel that students should be excluded from activity participation, other than athletics, for failure to maintain a minimal GPA. One fifth of the administrators feel that married students should be excluded from activity participation. Students disagree; 80 percent do not think that married students should be excluded from activities. Almost a half of the students think that other students do not participate because their grades are not high enough.

Reality 5. Sponsors need additional training in student activity direction. Over half of the sponsors report no training for activity sponsorship. Fewer than one of five has taken a college course dealing with student activities. One in three has received training through inservice activities. Seven of 10 sponsors indicate they would like more training. Ninety-five percent of the administrators and 79 percent of the students feel prospective teachers should have more instruction in the area of student activities.

Reality 6. Sponsorship assignments and compensation are negotiable items in those schools with professional negotiation agreements. Over half of the administrators report that their sponsors are working under profes-

sionally negotiated agreements and in 82 percent of these the compensation for sponsors is a negotiated item.

Reality 7. The interest and commitment of sponsors to student activities is perceived to be less than desirable. Over 70 percent of the administrators report that today's teachers are less interested in activities than teachers were 10 years ago. Over 40 percent of the administrators and 33 percent of the students feel the attitude of faculty toward student activities is indifferent or unsatisfactory. Only half of the students feel that most or all of their sponsors are really interested in the activities they sponsor.

Reality 8. Most administrators report that student activities are and should be financially self-supporting. Tax monies are the source of financial support for most activities in less than a quarter of the schools. Over 60 percent of the administrators feel extracurricular activities should be largely self-supporting.

Reality 9. Sponsors and students see a small group of students participating in and controlling extracurricular activities in their schools. Seventy percent of sponsors and students agree that cliques of students control activities.

Reality 10. The credibility of student government is less than desirable. Only about half of the students agree with the following statement: Student council provides an effective means for involving students in the process of resolving school issues and problems.

Challenges

Challenge 1. It is time to stop pretending that all is well in the activity programs of today's secondary schools. We cannot long expect to maintain comprehensive programs in the face of:

- lessened student interest in extracurricular activities;
- limited funds and budget reductions;
- questionable faculty and administrator commitment;
- negotiated contracts; and
- inadequately prepared sponsors.

It is necessary to confront the several publics—patrons, school boards, students, and teachers—with the fact that we have problems. Administrators and a few interested sponsors and students cannot solve the problems.

Challenge 2. Administrators and teachers who are knowledgeable and committed to the potential and importance of the activities programs in the comprehensive secondary schools of the '70s are essential. It is necessary to seek out teachers and administrators who have had formal instruction in student activities. It is also necessary to evaluate the performance of teachers in their sponsorship roles and to reward them accordingly. If student activities exist for the students, then students are the appropriate evaluators of activities.

Challenge 3. The existence and function of student activity advocacy groups must be supported. These groups need to demand relevant and viable activity programs. All too frequently strong activities are viewed by school boards as costly, by teachers as bad duty, by administrators as troublesome and a source of problems, and by critics as unnecessary. Typically there is no single common interest group supporting comprehensive and balanced activity programs, rather only splintered interest groups such as athletic or music boosters.

Challenge 4. A blue ribbon task force must be established to determine where we are and where we should be in the area of student activities. This task force should be comprised of representatives of teacher associations, administrator groups, school board associations, state athletic (activity) association, and others. The charge would be to review the purpose and objectives of extracurricular activities; to study the state of student activities in today's schools; to recommend viable postures for boards, administrators, sponsors, and students; to publicize the characteristics and advantages of strong activity programs; to identify problems; and to look ahead to activities in the next decade.

3. The Student's View

EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES ARE extremely important to students. Three in 10 students feel that extracurricular activities are more important than their courses. Almost seven in 10 students feel that participation in extracurricular activities is more important than achieving high grades or having a car to drive to school. Obviously participation is the "in" thing among students concerned about peer status, since more than 97 percent indicate that extracurricular activity contributes to status achievement.

Which one of the following is most likely to establish status and acceptance by students in this school?

	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500+
Active participation in extracurricular activities	56	52	59	57
Academic success by earning high grades	19	21	18	17
Active involvement in student government	13	14	11	14
Having a car to drive to school	10	11	9	8
Being a nonparticipant in extracurricular activities	3	3	3	5

Another indicator of the importance of the extracurricular program is the willingness of students to allocate their time and money to activities.

Estimate how much money you spent this year participating in extracurricular activities.

	% of Total	% by Grade 9	10	11	12
Less than $100	46	68	54	40	27
$100-$200	28	20	26	35	29
$200-$300	14	6	10	14	21
$300-$400	7	4	6	6	12
Over $400	6	2	5	5	11

One half of the students surveyed devote a minimum of four hours per week to extracurricular activities, while nearly two in five spend 10 or more

hours in student activities. While a majority of students spend $100 or more annually on activities, more than one in four spends more than $200. Only one in four considers himself to be inactive in the activity program.

Which best describes your present involvement in extracurricular activities?

	% of Total	% by Grade 9	10	11	12
Very active	20	16	21	17	25
Somewhat active	54	56	52	57	46
Inactive	27	28	28	27	28

Kinds of Participation

The activities in which students most frequently participate are interscholastic athletics (seven of 10), social activities (seven of 10), and intramural athletics (six of 10). Half the students participate in music related activities (band, chorus, madrigals), contests (essay, science, poster), and special days and events (assemblies, pageants). Four in 10 participate in athletic-related activities (letter clubs, pep clubs, cheerleading), while three in 10 participate in student governance (student council or class officer), speech-related events (class plays, Thespians, forensics), class-related clubs (science, math), and publications (newspaper, yearbook, literary magazine). Only one in four participates in honor associations and societies (National Honor Society, Beta, Quill and Scroll). Although clubs are popular as a general category, only two or three students in 10 participate in career-related (future teacher, future farmer), hobby or leisure (chess, photography), school service (audiovisual, tutoring), or community-related (Red Cross, anti-pollution) clubs.

Students presently or previously participating in extracurricular activities.

	% of Total		% of Total
Interscholastic athletics	70	School governance	34
(boys 35%; girls 30%)		Class-related clubs	32
Social life	69	Speech-related activities	31
Intramural athletics	64	Publications	30
(boys 30%; girls 29%)		Honor associations/societies	28
Music-related activities	52	Career-related clubs	27
Contests	49	Hobby-leisure clubs	25
Special days/events	47	School service clubs	20
Athletic-related events	40	Community-oriented clubs	18

A revealing though somewhat disconcerting statistic is the proportion of students who have never participated in extracurricular activities. Two of three students have never participated in community, school service, hobby-leisure, career, honor, speech, or class (subject) related clubs. Simi-

larly, two of three have never participated in school governance (student council or class officer) or publication connected activities. Additionally, two of three boys and two of three girls have never participated in intramural athletics.

More troublesome are those students who have never participated, but who want to participate, in specific activities. Two of 10 students express a desire to participate in school publications, hobby-leisure clubs, and school governance. More than one in 10 students express a desire to participate in more activities but have been unable to do so.

Students who have never participated, but would like to participate in extracurricular activities.

	% of Total		% of Total
Publications	22	Class-related clubs	12
Hobby-leisure clubs	21	Interscholastic athletics (girls)	11
School governance	20	Social life	11
Community-oriented clubs	17	Special events/days	10
Honor associations/societies	16	Music-related activities	10
School service clubs	16	Intramural athletics (girls)	10
Career-related clubs	14	Contests	9
Speech-related	13	Intramural athletics (boys)	7
Athletic-related	12	Interscholastic athletics (boys)	5

Quality and Effectiveness of Activities

The students are generally pleased with the activity programs, with six of 10 rating their school's programs as satisfactory, and less than two in 10 rating them as unsatisfactory. However, students appear to be somewhat less certain about the adequacy of the quantity of offerings in their schools. The students from the smaller schools (less than 500) are significantly less satisfied with the activity programs and offerings in their schools than are the students in the larger schools.

Extracurricular activities in this school are effectively meeting the needs of (students):

	% of Total		% of Total
Male	86	Extremely creative	72
Average academic ability	84	Minority	65
High academic ability	76	Low academic ability	49
Female	76	Nonconforming	45

Although a two-to-one majority feels that the unique needs of the male, the female, the average, the high ability, the creative, and the minority student are being met effectively, students are considerably less certain that

the needs of the low ability or nonconforming students are being met. The students generally feel that the commonly accepted objectives of activity programs are important and effectively achieved in their schools.

The extracurricular activity program in my school provides experiences, opportunities:

	% of Total			
	Extremely Important	Important	Unimportant	Extremely Unimportant
Of value to students after leaving school	55	32	9	4
That prevent students from dropping out of school	46	33	14	6
To improve school-home-community relations	41	46	11	2
For membership to all students on a democratic basis	38	38	19	5
For students to assist in resolution of school problems	36	47	12	5
To change activities with changed student interests	33	47	15	5
To supplement and enrich classroom experiences	33	49	15	3
For student leadership	32	52	13	3
For students to broaden personal, social contacts	32	50	14	4
To develop good pupil-teacher relations	31	50	14	5
For students to determine the nature of activity program	30	52	14	4

Why Students Do/Don't Participate

The most common reasons why students choose to participate in extracurricular activities are for fun and personal enjoyment (82%); for personal achievement (84%); and as an outlet for individual needs and interests (76%). Other important motivators for participation cited by most students are to explore learning experiences unavailable in the regular school program (65%); to broaden personal and social contacts (66%); to develop leadership abilities (63%); to prepare for effective citizenship (58%); to

earn awards, letters, and prizes (56%); to achieve popularity and social status (56%); and to prepare for a vocation (54%). Less important reasons cited by the students are: to please parents and family (49%); to participate in the resolution of school problems (49%); to serve the school (50%); because friends participate (48%); to supplement and enrich classroom experiences (44%); and to improve relations with teachers/administrators (43%). Only one in four students cites getting one's picture in the yearbook as a reason for participation; fewer still (15%) cite teacher expectation as a reason to participate in activities.

The primary reason given for nonparticipation in activities is employment outside the school (68%). The irrelevance of activities to the interests or needs of students and the scheduling of activities after school are deemed important reasons for nonparticipation by a majority of students (51%). Significant numbers cite the following as reasons for nonparticipation: activities are controlled by social groups or cliques (47%); students are not chosen for the activity (46%); their grades are not high enough to allow them to participate (41%); faculty sponsors aren't really interested in extracurricular activities (40%); and students aren't aware of available activities (40%). Activity costs (38%), parental disapproval (35%), the domination of activities by teachers (34%), and the unavailability of activities appropriate for their sex (31%) are deemed less important.

Do you see a small group of students controlling the extracurricular activities in this school?

	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500+
Yes	67	66	67	70
No	29	31	31	28
No response	4	3	2	2

Are there unrecognized activities such as fraternities and sororities that enroll students from this school?

	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500+
Yes	13	7	17	17
No	37	41	35	31
Don't know	50	52	47	52

Is there an underground newspaper in this school?

	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500+
Yes	8	6	9	8
No	72	74	71	66
Don't know	21	20	20	25

As might be expected, a high proportion (two-thirds) of the students feel that a small group of students controls the activities in their school. Although only one in 10 students reports the existence of non-recognized activities like fraternities or sororities in school, the proportion of students in schools of over 500 reporting these activities is double that in the smaller schools. Less than one student in 10 indicates the presence of an underground newspaper.

Students are equally divided in their perceptions as to what weakens activity programs. While one in four indicates that activities are not relevant to student interests, one in five feels that competition by nonschool activities, lack of administrative support, or excessive costs to students are harmful to strong activity programs. One in three students indicates that lack of faculty and administrative support weakens activity programs.

Which of the following is the most harmful to strong extracurricular programs in this school?

	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500+
Lack of activities relevant to student interests	26	27	24	26
Competition by nonschool activities	21	20	22	22
Lack of administrative support	20	19	21	19
Cost of student activities	19	20	19	19
Lack of faculty commitment	14	14	14	13

Even though a majority of students report the attitudes of faculty members toward the extracurricular range from satisfactory (48%) to excellent (18%), one student in three classifies faculty attitudes as indifferent (25%) to unsatisfactory (9%). The students' assessments of the interest of sponsors are generally positive, with a majority reporting most (37%) or all (15%) of their sponsors to be interested in the activities they sponsor.

Critical Activity Issues

Four of five students indicate that girls should have more opportunities to participate in interscholastic sports, while six in 10 students think girls should participate with boys in interscholastic sports. Similarly, four of five feel that extra-school contests (essay, poster) are educationally worthwhile. However, only four in 10 feel that teachers should be permitted to require contest participation. Seven of 10 students feel that participation in commencement exercises should be on a voluntary basis while only four in 10 feel that baccalaureate services should be eliminated. Slightly less than one in two recommends that assembly attendance should be mandatory. Only one in five indicates that married students should be excluded from extracurricular activity participation.

Attendance/participation:

	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500+
Girls should be extended more opportunity for participation in interscholastic sports	79	79	81	76
Contests (essay, poster) sponsored by groups outside the school are worthwhile educationally	77	76	79	74
Commencement should be voluntary	72	74	72	69
Girls should participate with boys in interscholastic sports	58	60	57	58
School assemblies should be required	49	51	51	40
Baccalaureate services should be eliminated	39	32	43	45
Teachers should be able to require the participation of their classes in essay, poster contests	39	42	39	33
Married students should be excluded from activities	19	20	18	20

A majority of the students agree that the student council provides an effective means for involving students in the resolution of school issues and problems. The students of the large schools (over 1,500) are less positive in their perception of the effectiveness of the student council. Two of three feel that the socially oriented activities are effectively meeting students' needs in today's secondary schools.

The student council provides an effective means for involving students in the process of resolving school issues and problems.

	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500+
Strongly agree	18	18	22	11
Agree with reservation	36	34	37	38
Disagree with reservation	24	25	21	28
Strongly disagree	22	23	20	23

The social activities are effectively meeting the needs of a majority of today's secondary school students.

	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500+
Strongly agree	24	24	25	24
Agree with reservation	43	41	44	44
Disagree with reservation	20	22	19	19
Strongly disagree	13	13	12	13

Nearly four of five students (79%) feel that teachers should receive more college instruction in their extracurricular area. Similarly, four of five (77%) agree that people other than teachers should be permitted to serve as activity sponsors. However, slightly less than one in two students (47%) indicates that faculty members should be paid for sponsorships. It is of interest to observe that nearly one in two students (49%) agrees that school publications should be reviewed and censored for inappropriate content. The likelihood of agreement with censorship is inversely related to school size (53% in schools with less than 500 students, 48% in schools with less than 1,500 students, 43% in schools with more than 1,500 students).

4. The Administrator's View

THE RESPONDENTS, 80 percent of whom are principals, state that a director of student activities is needed, particularly in those schools with more than 1,500 students. An activity advisory council does not exist in most schools, but in those schools that do have one, the membership is generally made up of faculty, administrators, and students.

Activities in these schools take place at various times during the day. A third of the administrators report that their activities are scheduled during the school day through periodic modifications of the class schedule. The remainder of the administrators report that their activities are scheduled either during the school day through an activity period, before and after the regular school day (the most popular method of scheduling in large schools), or after the regular school day. Few schools schedule activities only before the regular school day.

Do you feel that this school needs a director of student activities?

	% of Total	% of Total School Size		
		0-500	500-1500	1500+
Yes	58	41	59	88
No	42	59	41	12

Does this school have an activity advisory council other than the student council or its equivalent?

	% of Total	% of Total School Size		
		0-500	500-1500	1500+
Yes	16	10	18	22
No	84	90	82	77

Which of the following best describes the membership on this advisory council?

	% of Total	% of Total School Size		
		0-500	500-1500	1500+
Faculty, administrators, and students	39	32	45	32
Faculty members and administrators	24	39	16	24
Faculty, administrators, students, and parents	10	5	12	10
Faculty, administrators, and parents	7	4	4	19
None of the above	20	20	23	15

Activities, other than interscholastic sports, are scheduled:

	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500+
During the school day through periodic modifications of the class system	35	43	33	28
Before and after the regular school day	24	15	25	37
During the school day through an activity period	20	21	22	13
After the regular school day	19	19	18	21
Before the regular school day	1	2	2	1

Sponsorship

Several questions relate to the compensation, selection, and interest in the programs of the sponsors. Approximately half of the respondents indicate that they operate under a professional negotiations agreement. (Twice as many large schools operate under negotiated contracts as small schools.) Of these schools, 82 percent state that means for compensating sponsors are specified in this agreement. Six in 10 sponsors are compensated for their student activity, and a variety of methods for compensation are used. Although almost 90 percent indicate that the compensation is monetary, only a fifth of the schools reimburse all activity sponsors. Half of the schools reimburse only the sponsors of the major activities and another fifth reimburse only athletic sponsors.

	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500+
Does this school operate under a professional negotiation agreement?				
Yes	51	34	58	66
No	49	66	42	33
Are the means for compensating sponsors specified in the agreement?				
Yes	82	74	83	84
No	18	25	16	16
Are sponsors compensated?				
Yes	60	59	61	58
No	40	41	39	41
What form of compensation is used?				
Money increment	89	85	90	90
Reduction of duties	6	9	4	7
Reduced class load	5	6	5	2

	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500+
Which sponsors are reimbursed?				
Sponsors of major activities	49	48	48	56
All sponsors	21	18	24	20
Athletic sponsors only	21	21	21	19
No sponsors	9	13	7	5

Slightly more than half of the teachers become sponsors by volunteering for the position and being approved by the administration. Only 11 percent of the sponsors are nominated or chosen by students. The remaining 36 percent of the sponsors are recommended or appointed by the administration.

Seven out of 10 respondents feel that teachers typically are less interested in student activities than teachers 10 years ago. This change in interest is generally attributed to a reluctance by teachers to provide the time and energy required by the sponsorships.

	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500+
How are sponsors selected?				
Volunteer and are approved by the administration	52	38	57	65
Recommended by the principal and appointed by the superintendent	32	39	32	18
Chosen by the students	6	8	5	6
Nominated by the students and approved by the administration	5	5	4	8
Appointed by the superintendent	4	9	2	3
What accounts for most of the change in teacher attitudes toward student activities?				
Reluctance to provide time and energy	61	65	60	58
Student apathy	17	19	17	16
Inadequate reward	12	11	13	12
Lack of appreciation for the potential contribution of activities	6	2	6	10
Other	4	3	4	4

Popularity of Activities Among Students

In order to determine the popularity of extra-class activities, principals were asked to indicate whether, in their opinion, 19 specified activities are increasing, decreasing, or remain unchanged in terms of popularity among

students. The activity that is definitely increasing in popularity is interscholastic athletics for girls.

Popularity of activities among students (* denotes classification of activity).

Activity	% Increasing	% Decreasing	% Unchanged
Student participation in school governance	30	28	42*
Class-related clubs	16	55*	29
Hobby-leisure oriented clubs	39*	31	30
Career-related clubs	21	37	42*
School service clubs	31	28	41*
Community-society oriented clubs	25	31	43*
Publications	28	20	52*
Honor associations-societies	23	21	56*
Speech-related activities	35*	31	34
Music-related activities	49*	14	34
Interscholastic athletics for boys	48*	15	34
Interscholastic athletics for girls	81*	7	12
Intramural athletics for boys	36	18	46*
Intramural athletics for girls	48*	15	3
Athletic-related activities	27	22	51*
Special events days	21	35	44*
Homerooms	10	36	54*
Contests	23	40*	37
Social activities	26	38*	36

Principals say that three activities are decreasing in popularity: class-related clubs (such as math or science clubs); contests (essay, poster, or science contests at the local, state, or national level); and social activities (dances, proms, or banquets). Most activities (10 of 19) are reported as unchanged in popularity with students in 40 to 56 percent of the schools.

Existence of selected events and practices.

	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500+
End of school awards program	90	91	89	91
Prom	71	66	70	85
Baccalaureate service	49	56	45	45
Senior trip	29	36	26	21
Activities which are unrecognized (e.g., fraternities, sororities)	7	3	7	11
Underground newspaper	3	3	2	6
Attendance required at:				
Awards program (by recipients)	43	51	43	29
Commencement	43	61	36	24
Baccalaureate	38	57	26	21

Questions were also asked about the existence of the following activities in the schools sampled: underground newspapers, school award programs, proms, senior trips, baccalaureate services, and unrecognized activities such as fraternities and sororities. Questions were also posed regarding required attendance at end-of-school awards programs, baccalaureate services, and commencements. There is an awards program in nine of 10 schools; however, baccalaureate services are held in only slightly less than half of the schools. Proms are more popular in large schools than in small ones. Attendance is not required for awards programs, commencements, or baccalaureate services in more than half of the schools.

Status of Activity Programs

Which is a bigger problem, overparticipation or underparticipation in student activities? What percentage of students participate in at least one organized student activity? Has the percentage of students participating in activities over the past 10 years increased, decreased, or remained about the same?

Underparticipation is reported as a problem in 75 percent of the schools. For example, only a fifth of the schools report that over 75 percent of the students participate in at least one activity. The majority of principals (41%) state that only 25 percent to 49 percent of the students in their schools participate in at least one activity. Although the percentage of students participating in activities has decreased over the past 10 years in four of 10 schools, there has been an increase in 29 percent of the schools. The percentage of students participating in activities is greatest in small schools; participation has decreased during the past 10 years to the greatest extent in the large schools.

	% of Total	% of Total School Size		
		0-500	500-1500	1500+
A bigger problem is:				
Under-participation	75	63	81	83
Over-participation	25	37	19	16
Percentage of students participating in at least one activity:				
25% to 49%	41	28	45	58
50% to 74%	33	30	36	29
Over 75%	20	40	12	4
Less than 25%	6	3	7	9
Percentage of students participating over the past 10 years has:				
Decreased	41	35	40	58
Remained about the same	30	32	30	22
Increased	29	32	30	20

A point system for participation in extra-class activities is used in only 12 percent of the schools and its use is not related to school size. For these schools which do use a system, its purpose varies. Almost half of the schools with a point system use it to increase participation. A point system is used to decrease participation in 13 percent of the schools. Tradition is cited as the reason for use in the remaining 38 percent of the schools.

	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500+
Is a point system for participation used?				
Yes	12	11	12	12
No	88	88	88	87
The point system's purpose is:				
To increase participation	49	58	51	28
Tradition	38	31	35	56
To decrease participation	13	11	14	17

Principals were asked to compare the state of student activity programs in secondary schools today with programs 10 years ago. Most of them (40%) believe that student activities have decreased in significance. But there is no decided trend for this question because 36 percent, only four percent less, respond that activities are more significant than previously.

As compared to 10 years ago and in relationship to the program of studies student activity programs in secondary schools today are:

	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500+
Less significant	40	35	47	46
More significant	36	40	34	36
Relatively unchanged	24	26	25	18

For the next question, "In your opinion have changes in activity programs kept pace with other educational changes over the past 10 years?" 51 percent respond yes and 49 percent respond no. A larger percentage of respondents from small schools answer yes than medium or large schools.

Changes in activity programs have kept pace with other educational changes over the past 10 years:

	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500+
Yes	51	60	46	46
No	49	40	54	54

Principals were asked which of five alternatives is most detrimental to strong student activity programs in today's secondary schools. More than half say, "Competition of nonschool activities for the time and interests of students." This reason is particularly popular with large school principals. A fifth of the principals feel that lack of faculty commitment is most detrimental to activity programs.

Most detrimental to strong activity programs is:

	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500+
Competition of nonschool activities for time and interest of students	52	43	53	63
Lack of faculty commitment	20	23	20	14
Lack of activities relevant to student needs and interests	14	17	13	11
Cost of student activities	11	14	11	8
Lack of administrative support	3	3	4	3

The attitudes of students and of faculty members toward extracurricular activities are reported to be fairly similar. Fifty-three percent of the principals say both students and teachers have satisfactory attitudes. The category receiving the second number of responses is "indifferent." Sixteen percent of the students are enthusiastic and only four percent of the teachers are enthusiastic. More teachers (five percent) than students (one percent) have unsatisfactory attitudes regarding activities.

	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500+
The attitude of students today toward the activity program is:				
Enthusiastic	16	20	14	12
Satisfactory	53	51	57	48
Indifferent	30	26	29	40
Unsatisfactory	1	2	0	0
The attitude of faculty members today toward the activity program is:				
Enthusiastic	4	5	3	1
Satisfactory	53	54	52	52
Indifferent	38	36	39	42
Unsatisfactory	5	5	6	5

Other Opinions

A variety of opinions were expressed on many other aspects of activity programs. The item with which most principals (95 percent) agree is that prospective teachers should receive more instruction in their undergraduate programs in the area of student activities. A close runner-up (92%), is

the respondents' belief that girls should be extended more opportunity for participation in interscholastic sports.

More than 80 percent of the principals feel that school publications should be reviewed and when necessary censored, and that the NASSP Advisory List of National Contests and Activities provides an effective guideline.

There are eight issues with which the majority of principals disagree. They feel that socially-oriented activities (such as dances) are ineffective in meeting the personal-social needs of the majority of students; that lists of students' names should not be made available to extra-school organizations for purposes of awards; that the movement to an extended school year program will not strengthen student activity programs; that students should not be excluded from participation in activities (other than athletics) for less than minimal grades; that girls should not participate with boys in interscholastic sports; that student activities have not resulted in the exploitation of students; that teachers should not require students to participate in contests (such as essay or poster); and that married students should not be excluded from activities.

Opinions regarding various issues. Respondents agree that:

Issue	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500+
Prospective teachers should receive more instruction in their undergraduate programs in the area of student activities	95	96	94	99
Girls should be extended more opportunity for participation in interscholastic sports	92	90	91	97
The NASSP Advisory List of National Contests and Activities provides an effective guideline for the administrator of student activity programs	89	86	91	84
School publications should be reviewed and when necessary censored for inappropriate content by faculty and/or administration	86	88	86	80
Contests (e.g., essay, poster, art) sponsored by special interest groups outside of the school are worthwhile educational activities	77	80	76	69
Both students and teachers participate effectively in the management of student activity finances	75	73	76	70
The student council, or its counterpart, provides an effective means for involving students in the process of resolving school issues and problems	74	73	76	75

Opinions regarding various issues.

Issues	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500 +
Crowd control at interscholastic athletic contests is becoming a significant problem	73	67	75	79
Faculty members should be compensated for all activity sponsorships and participation	71	70	71	72
The student council, or its counterpart, can typically be expected to provide an effective body for approving new activities	71	69	73	70
The means typically used to finance student activities are justifiable educationally	70	73	66	68
The amount of activity participation by students is inversely related to the size of the school	67	71	64	64
Away-from-school overnight trips should be eliminated	64	65	64	60
Student activities should be largely financially self-supporting	62	72	62	46
Students should be required to attend school assemblies, including pep sessions	61	72	58	49
Attendance at commencement should be voluntary	60	46	63	81
Participation in activities is becoming financially impossible for many students as costs soar	60	57	61	63
Baccalaureate services should be eliminated	55	52	54	67
Non-faculty employees should be permitted to serve as sponsors of student activities	53	55	52	47
The traditional student activity program is no longer appropriate for the students of today's secondary schools	51	48	52	54
Social activities (e.g., dances, banquets, proms) are effectively meeting the personal-social needs of a majority of today's secondary school students	40	38	41	38
Lists of student names should be made available to extra-school organizations for purposes of awards	37	47	31	33
Movement to extended school year programs will strengthen student activity programs in secondary schools	35	42	35	28

Opinions regarding various issues.

Issues	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500 +
Students should be excluded from participation in activities other than athletics for failure to maintain a minimal grade point average	32	39	29	23
Girls should participate with boys in interscholastic sports	32	29	34	35
Student activities have, all too frequently, resulted in the exploitation of students	31	38	28	24
Teachers should be able to require participation in contests	31	33	49	18
Married students should be excluded from activity participation	19	23	19	10

It is interesting to note that the following issues are more important to small-school principals than to those in large schools: worth of contests; self-supporting activities; required attendance at assemblies; making names available to organizations giving awards; effectiveness of year-round schools in strengthening activities; exclusion from activities of students with low GPA's; exploiting of student participants in activities; exclusion from activities of married students.

Large-school principals agree that the following ideas are more important than do small school administrators: athletic crowd control is a problem; commencement attendance should be voluntary; and baccalaureate services should be eliminated.

Recognition of Activities

What characteristics must an activity possess in order to be recognized as an offering within a secondary school? Almost half of the principals believe that "scheduled on school time" is a requirement for recognition.

Ninty-nine percent of the principals agree that an extra-class activity must be sanctioned by the school and directed toward student needs and interests, and 98 percent believe that the activity must be voluntarily engaged in by the student. Ninety percent of the principals feel that the activity should be sponsored by a faculty member, 88 percent believe that it should meet in school facilities, and 86 percent feel that students, rather than faculty, should assume major responsibility for the activity's success. Seventy-four percent have the opinion that the activity program should take place outside of the regular classroom, 72 percent believe it should carry no academic credit and 72 percent feel it should be financed by the school. That the activity be mainly personal or social, rather than academic, is the belief of 58 percent of the principals.

Effectiveness with Students

Student activities in today's secondary schools are more effective in meeting the needs of some types of students than others. The school principals in this study noted opinions of the effectiveness of extra-class activities for eight different types of students.

Male students and students of average academic ability are being best served by the activity program according to 84 percent of the principals. Activities programs are believed least effective with students who are non-conformist (23%) and with students who have a low academic ability (42%). Programs are considered effective with female students (69%) and with students of high academic ability (67%). More than half report that the needs of extremely creative (59%) and minority group (54%) students are met by student activities. School size, it appears, has little effect on the effectiveness of activity programs.

Administrators indicate that activities are not open to everyone. A third of the principals report that their schools have a policy requiring a grade point average above that of their state activity association for student government members and class officers. A third of the principals believe that students should be excluded from participation in activities, other than athletics, for failure to maintain a minimal grade point average; a fifth of the principals state that married students should be excluded from activity participation.

	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500+
Does your school have a policy that requires a GPA above that of the state activity (athletic) association for participation?				
Student government	33	34	34	30
Class officer	29	26	29	33
As an administrator, do you agree that membership in activities is limited?				
Students should be excluded from participation in activities, other than athletics, for failure to maintain a minimal GPA	32	39	29	13
Married students should be excluded from activity participation	19	23	19	10

5. The Sponsor's View

IT WOULD APPEAR that sponsors have been matched fairly well with the activities they pursue. There is no category of activities where more than four percent of existing sponsors state that they want to end their involvement. At the same time, there are only two activity categories where more than 10 percent of the sponsors say they would like to assume a responsibility that they have never had. In career-related and hobby-leisure oriented clubs, fewer than 15 percent of the sponsoring teachers desire a change.

There are several kinds of activities (social activities, homerooms, special day events, and school governance) with which at least 65 percent of the teachers have had involvement at one time or another. As might be expected, those activity areas that require special skills or training (music, athletics, speech) have the lowest percent of teacher involvement.

With which activities are you currently involved or have you been involved?

	% of Total
Social activities	82
Homerooms	78
Special day events	76
School governance	66
Contests	55
Class-related clubs	47
Athletic-related activities	46
Boys' athletics	37
Publications	35
Community-oriented clubs	32
Honor associations	32
School service clubs	32
Speech activities	31
Hobby clubs	26
Boys' intramurals	25
Girls' athletics	25
Girls' intramurals	23
Career-related clubs	22
Music	15

With which activities *were* you involved?	% of Total
Homerooms	28
Intramural athletics	28
Class-related clubs	25
Social activities	24
Contests	23
Interscholastic athletics	23
Special day events	20
Speech-related activities	20
Athletic-related activities (pep clubs, cheerleaders, etc.)	19

Three-fourths of the respondents indicate that they are now associated with activities that they were involved with as high school students, and about six of 10 were in similar activities in college.

With the knowledge that there are more social studies, English, mathematics, and science teachers on secondary school staffs, it is no surprise that these fields yield almost 70 percent of those teachers who are currently sponsoring or advising student activities.

Those respondents who are involved with activity programs devote a great deal of time to these responsibilities. More than one of four respond-

	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500+
How many activities do you sponsor?				
1	18	15	19	19
2	25	24	26	19
3	20	23	20	16
4	11	14	9	9
More than 4	26	24	26	37
How many hours per week do you devote to activity responsibilities?				
0-2	21	24	21	14
3-5	31	30	34	20
6-8	17	15	18	17
9-11	8	8	8	6
Over 11	23	23	19	43
Do you spend evening time?				
Yes	95	95	94	97
No	5	5	6	3
Do you spend weekend time?				
Yes	92	92	91	97
No	8	8	9	3

ents report that they are currently involved with more than four activities. Two-thirds of the respondents have three or more activities for which they have sole or joint responsibility. Almost half of the respondents state that they spend six or more hours per week on student activity business, and approximately one of four respondents indicates that he spends over 11 hours per week with student activity responsibilities.

Sponsors from junior-senior high schools (grades 8-12) report that they spend more hours and sponsor more activities than their counterparts in other schools. More than 92 percent report that they devote time in the evenings to their role as adviser or sponsor, and 95 percent indicate that they spend time on weekends. The number of years of teaching experience, degree held, and tenure status do not appear to affect the number of hours devoted to sponsorship, nor does the time spent in evenings or on weekends. Sex is a factor, as male sponsors are involved with a greater number of activities, spend more hours per week, and devote more evening time than do female sponsors.

Sponsors from the larger schools (1,500 up) spend more hours per week, sponsor more activities, and devote more weekend and evening time to duties connected with their role as sponsor.

Background and Training

More than half of the sponsors (53%) have had no training for their roles in the student activity program. Other sources of sponsor training are: college training (16%), convention seminars (11%), workshops (11%), and inservice (9%). At the same time nearly three-fourths (72%) of those without training would like to receive some, and, of those who have some training more than three in four (78%) indicate that they would like more.

Sponsors report that they have attempted to keep up with current developments in student activities. Close to 80 percent report that they are familiar with current research, articles, and books related to this field.

For those desirous of more training, 90 percent prefer some form of in-service experience, either at the school level or through regional and national workshops and seminars.

Selection and Compensation

Approximately half of the sponsors volunteered for their assignments. Years of teaching experience, sex, and the size of the school in which the

How did you become a sponsor?

	% of Total	% of Total School Size 0-500	500-1500	1500+
Volunteered	45	39	46	52
Assigned	34	33	35	24
Contract obligation	15	20	13	18
Selected by students	6	8	6	6

sponsor teaches seem to have no effect on whether one has volunteered or has been assigned.

Less than half of the sponsors are compensated for their work in extracurricular activities. Of those that are, over 80 percent receive a monetary increment. The most frequent payment per year is $100-$300, yet 30 percent receive over $500 per year, and over 10 percent receive more than $1,000 per year. The only other significant form of compensation is reduced class load, reported by almost 10 percent of the sponsors. Over 60 percent feel that the compensation they receive is inadequate.

Do you feel you are paid enough for your extracurricular duties?

	% of Total	% of Total School Size		
		0-500	500-1500	1500+
Yes	38	35	39	41
No	62	65	62	59

Sponsors are in agreement that the commonly stated objectives for activity programs characterize the programs in their schools. The one objective that is identified as being important by the lowest percentage of sponsors focuses on whether the activity program motivates class instruction; however, two-thirds of the sponsors feel this is important.

Do you think these objectives are important to your schools' activity program?

	% of Total
Leadership development	98
Student initiative	98
Cooperative endeavors	97
Assist student to achieve self-realization	94
Carry-over value activities	93
Develop positive attitudes	93
School-home-community relationships	93
Change mechanism for modifying programs as needed	89
Accommodate all economic levels	88
Group interaction	88
Foster good student-teacher relations	87
Student input into activity program development	87
Democratic membership	85
Broaden social contacts	84
Opportunity for individual and group guidance	84
Resolution of school issues	84
Enhance classroom experience	83
Assist teachers in understanding student behavior	76
Explore new learning experiences	65
Motivate class instruction	64

A majority of the sponsors indicate that the activities program in their school possesses all of the characteristics listed here. The sole exception is

that more than half of the sponsors indicate the activities program is not financed by the school. There is an almost even split on the question of whether the program utilizes time during the school day.

What characteristics does your activity program have?

	% of Total
School sanctioned	97
Uses school facilities	96
Sponsored by faculty member	93
Voluntary student participation	93
Student centered	91
Activities directed toward student interests and needs	86
Occurs outside of classroom time	86
Social not academic	73
Carries academic credit	54
Students are responsible for the success or failure of activity	54
Meets on school time	51
School financed	43

Seventy percent of the sponsors indicate that the program in their school is controlled by a small group of students. There appears to be little difference in this belief with regard to school size.

Is the activity program controlled by a clique?

	% of Total	% of Total School Size		
		0-500	500-1500	1500+
Yes	70	69	68	80
No	30	31	32	20

Two-thirds of the sponsors report that their school has enough student activities to meet the needs of their student population. There is virtually no variance in this perception according to school size. More than 40 percent of the sponsors indicate that their student body could be characterized as apathetic or mostly apathetic. Again, school size is not a significant variable.

What type of student body does your school have?

	% of Total	% of Total School Size		
		0-500	500-1500	1500+
Active	13	14	12	13
Mostly active	47	47	48	46
Mostly apathetic	36	36	37	36
Apathetic	4	3	3	5

Appendix: Analysis of Respondents

Student views presented in this monograph are based upon the responses of some 1,500 students from 65 of 100 randomly selected schools drawn from a regional stratification of those schools affiliated with NASSP in 1974-75. Questionnaires were mailed with instructions to the principal to administer the questionnaires to non-homogeneously grouped classes.

Percentages of respondents were as follows: sex (male—47%, female—53%); race (white—86%, black—11%, other—3%); grade level (8th—13%, 9th—15%, 10th—13%, 11th—31%, 12th—28%); location (rural/small town—55%, urban—23%, suburban—22%); level of activity participation (very active—20%, somewhat active—53.5%, inactive—26.5%); and school marks (A—21%, B—48%, C—27%, D or below—4%).

Of particular interest is the satisfaction expressed by the students with their school (very satisfied—19%, somewhat satisfied—26%, ambivalent—43%, dissatisfied—7%, very dissatisfied—5%). The majority of students indicated they do not use tobacco (66%), marijuana (75%), or other drugs (90%). However, only 37 percent do not use beer or other alcoholic drinks.

The administrator and sponsor samples were drawn from the NASSP membership. The number of members in each state was calculated, and using a table of random numbers, five percent of each state's total representation on the mailing list was selected. The final sample consisted of 1,008 names—564 administrators returned their answer sheets, a return rate of 56 percent. Each administrator who received questionnaires also received two sponsor questionnaires which he was asked to have completed by two activity sponsors. The number of responses was 1,009, or 50 percent of the possible 2,016.

The respondents to the administrator questionnaire were typically senior high school principals of coeducational public schools in the north central section of the country with student enrollments of 500 to 1,500. Percentages of respondents were: region (North Central—43%, South—24%, Middle States—12%, West—7%, Northwest—5%, New England—4%); position (principal—80%, assistant principal—13%, superintendent—3%, director of student activities—2%); enrollment (less than 500—33%, 500 to 1,500—49%, over 1,500—18%); type (coeducational public school—93%, coeducational private school—3%, private boys—

3%, private girls—.7%, non-coeducational public—.4%); classification (senior high—50%, junior-senior high—22%, junior high—18%, middle—7%, K-12—3%); position of person responsible for activity program (principal--44%, assistant principal—14%, dean—11%, guidance director—9%, director of activities—8%, superintendent—2%, assistant superintendent—.2%, other—12%).

Sponsors reported the following information about themselves on the questionnaire: type of school (senior high—54%, junior-senior high—17%, junior high—20%, middle—5%, K-12—4%); location (rural/small town—53%, urban—22%, suburban—25%); sex (male—46%, female—54%); size of school (less than 500—33%, 500 to 1,500—53%, over 1,500—14%); college degree held (none—.7%, bachelors—53%, masters—44%, education specialist—2%, doctorate—.3%); employed in school with professional negotiations agreement (yes—61%, no—39%); employed in school where professional negotiations agreement establishes means of compensating sponsors (yes—76%, no—24%); type of association that represents teachers (education association—82%, union—9%, other—2%, none—7%).

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